



NEWS

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas L.A. County Board of Supervisors, 2nd District

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Ridley-Thomas calls for Countywide Cost Effective and Secure Method for Electronic Management of Patient Medical Records

LOS ANGELES COUNTY – The Board of Supervisors today approved Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas' request to direct county officials to conduct a feasibility study into . creating a countywide pilot program to develop a cost-effective and electronically secure exchange of patient medical records.

"There is a serious need to improve healthcare services in the County of Los Angeles and, in particular, in South Los Angeles," the Supervisor said in his proposal. "Numerous studies have documented higher levels of disease burden, health care demand and difficulties in accessing care in South Los Angeles."

Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said the closure of the Martin Luther King Jr. Hospital has resulted in increased inpatient services at surrounding County-operated and private hospitals. As a result, South Los Angeles is experiencing a critical shortage of medical providers.

Countywide, there are 57 pediatricians for every 100,000 children, according the California Endowment. But in South Los Angeles, the ratio is only about 11 pediatricians for every 100,000 children.

"Health information technology (HIT) could address some of this disease burden if it is strategically deployed," the Supervisor said. "HIT can help the South L.A. regional medical community ensure that patients get the quality care that they need, when they

need it, how they need it, and without duplication of unnecessary tests and unnecessary costs.”

His motion directed the County’s Chief Executive Officer and Chief Information Officer to work with the Department of Health Services and other appropriate departments to conduct a feasibility assessment of creating a countywide Health Information Technology Demonstration Project.

“A HIT initiative in South L.A. is especially timely as the County works to create a new publicly-funded private hospital to replace MLK Hospital,” the Supervisor said. “To be successful, this new hospital must be linked into a strongly coordinated system of regional public and private health care.”

His motion calls for the demonstration project to enable a cost-effective and secure electronic exchange of patient medical records among relevant public and private health providers. It will also strive to provide computerized analysis of patient data to alert doctors to early signs of disease.

Also included will be evidence-based treatment guidelines to assist doctors in integrating latest research data into practice with patients; outcome measurement capacity; and appropriate confidentiality protections.

The Supervisor’s motion also calls for the creation of a technical advisory committee that includes key private and public partners, such as USC, UCLA, Cal Tech, Loyola Marymount University, Claremont McKenna, Azusa Pacific University, and representatives from the Long Beach Network for Health, Performigence, National Integrated Health Network Coalition and Health-E-LA.

The County’s chief executive officer is scheduled to report back to the board in 60 days with a description of the proposed initiative, cost estimate, proposed technical advisory group members, proposed source of public and private financing, including federal economic stimulus funds, and an implementation schedule.

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